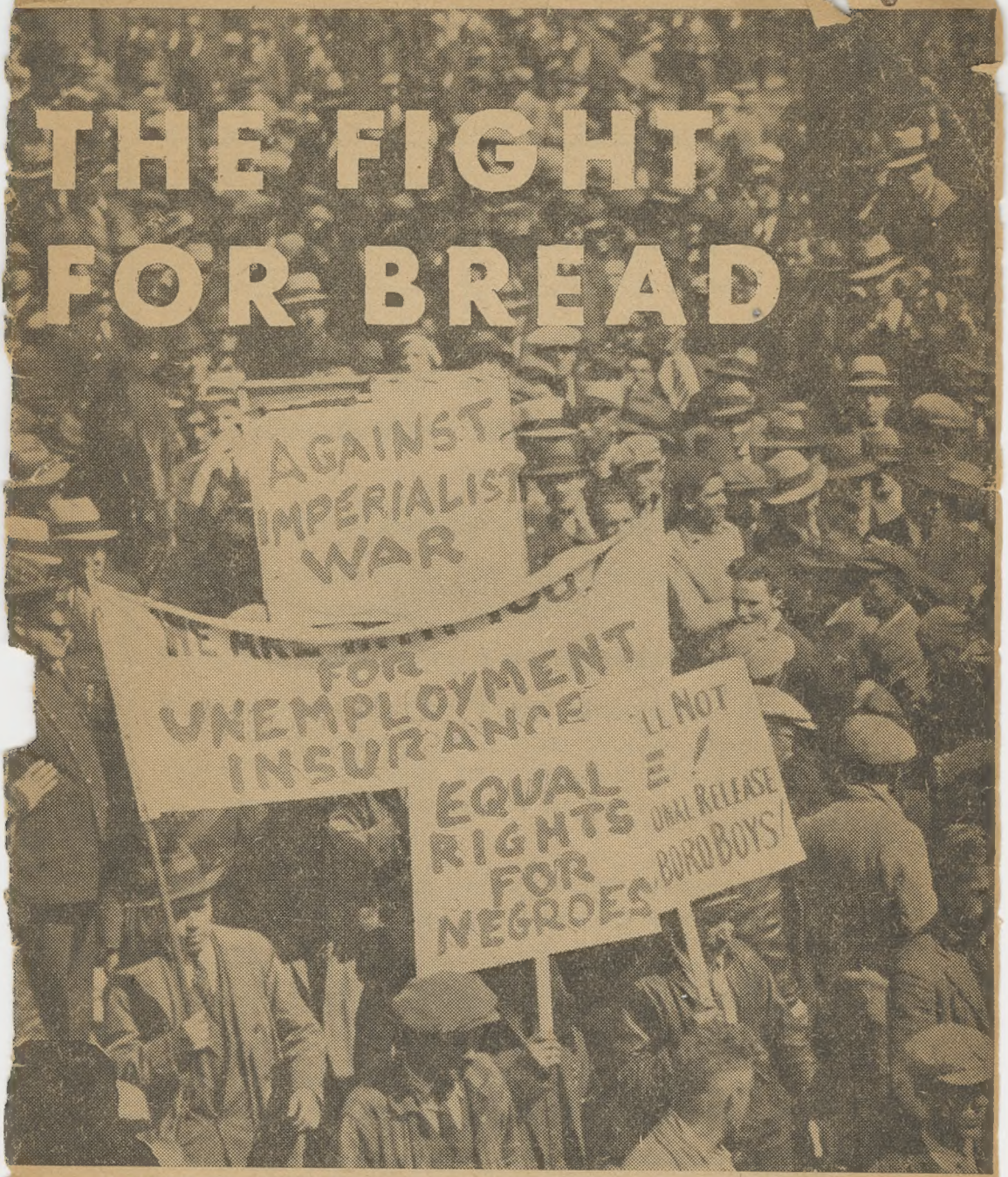
THE FIGHT FOR BREAD



KEYNOTE SPEECH BY EARL BROWDER AT THE COMMUNIST PARTY NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTION HELD IN CHICAGO, MAY 28-29, 1932

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For Working Class Unity in the Election Campaign! Against the Hunger and War Offensive of the Capitalists!

For the Workers' Ticket — Candidates of the Communist Party—Against the Candidates of the Bosses!

PLATFORM OF IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

1. **Unemployment and social insurance at the expense of the state and employers.**

2. Against Hoover's wage-cutting policy.

3. Emergency relief for the impoverished farmers without restrictions by the government and banks; exemption of impoverished farmers from taxes, and no forced collection of rents or debts.

4. Equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt.

5. Against capitalist terror; against all forms of suppression of the political rights of the workers.

6. Against imperialist war; for the defense of the Chinese people and of the Soviet Union.

The Fight For Bread

By EARL BROWDER

Keynote Speech Opening the National Nominating Convention of the Communist Party, Chicago, May 28, 1932.

COMRADES AND FELLOW WORKERS!

Our Convention meets in the midst of the greatest economic crisis ever known.

The present ferocious attack against the toiling masses — that is the capitalist way out of the crisis.

While millions starve, Hoover, chief of the Republican Party, leads the fight to save capitalist profits at the expense of the lives of the workers, their wives, and children.

THE FIGHT FOR JOBS, BREAD AND PEACE

In this situation only the Communist Party raises and fights for the workers' demands for jobs, bread, and peace. (Applause.)

For three years Hoover promised "prosperity in 60 days." This prosperity takes the form of cities of unemployed, homeless outcast millions living in packing-boxes, in cellars, under bridges, in sewers. Hundreds of these cities, all over the country, have very properly paid homage to the fame and glory of the great engineer in the White House by adopting the

name "Hooverville." The very name of this man has become a symbol of degradation and misery for the masses.

Fifteen million workers are unemployed, other millions have only part-time jobs, wage rates for the employed have been cut by 25 to 60 per cent, millions of farmers are being evicted from their farms because they are unable to pay taxes and interest on their mortgages. Starvation and disease are sucking the blood of men, women, and children in every state, every city, every working class neighborhood.

The issue of the elections is the issue of work and bread — of life or death for the workers and the farmers. (Applause.)

All this occurs in the richest country in the world. Our warehouses are bursting with unused food and clothing. Our cities are full of empty houses. There is plenty to spare of all things needed for life for all people.

Millions are starving precisely because there is *too much of everything*. That is what all the wise men of Wall Street tell us. That is the fundamental law of our economic and social system. That is capitalism. That is the inevitable result of a system in which the machinery of production and distribution is the private property of a small parasite class—the capitalist class.

The Communist Party is the only Party which organizes the workers and farmers to create a revolutionary government which will confiscate the industries, banks, railroads, etc., from the parasite capitalists who have proved they do not know how to run them, and to put the industrial machinery to work for the benefit of the masses of workers and farmers. (Applause.)

CAPITALISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR CRISIS

The question is not one of Hoover. It is of the system, of which way out of the crisis. Hoover's policies have been carried out by a coalition of Republican and Democratic parties. Between these parties there is a fight only about who shall get the graft of office, but complete agreement that the workers and farmers shall pay all the costs of the crisis, complete agreement that the government treasury shall be used primarily for the benefit of the banks, the railroads, the great corporations.

The "Reconstruction Corporation" that gave two billion dollars to the banks and corporations, was the joint work of Republicans and Democrats, and was endorsed by the leaders of the Socialist Party whose only complaint was that "it didn't go far enough."

The present projects before Congress supposedly for relief, from Hoover's billion, to Robinson's two billion, to Hearst's five billion, to the Socialist party's ten billion — all differ from one another only in the degree of their demagogy. They all agree that nothing can be done except through restoring capitalist profits and placing the burdens of the crisis upon the masses.

Even the shameful charity doles, which prolong the starvation of a portion of the unemployed, are not taken from the rich capitalists who own everything in rich America, but from the masses who have nothing except a remnant of a job at part-time.

A classical example of this is the New York "block-aid" system. Under this system each block is to take care of its own starving; down on the East Side where two thousand are starving together in one block, the few hundred with jobs in that block shall take care of others; up on Fifth Avenue, Morgan, Rockefeller and

Company will take care of all the unemployed in their blocks.

In putting across this beautiful scheme, which includes a system of blacklisting all radical workers spotted by the "block-aid committees," all those who support the capitalist way out of the crisis were brought forward; J. Pierpont Morgan spoke over the radio for it, and said: "You give a dime and I give a dime, and we all share equally"; over the same radio Morgan was followed by Norman Thomas, leader of the so-called Socialist Party, who supported Morgan and attacked the Communist Party as "slanderers" of Morgan's pure motives.

CAPITALIST SOLUTION OF CRISIS— HUNGER AND WAR

There are only two ways out of the crisis. One way is the capitalist way. That way is the attempt to restore capitalism, to restore profits. But to restore profits means to cut wages, to throw millions out of work, to refuse unemployment relief, to refuse social insurance, to pile heavy taxes upon the masses and reduce the taxes on wealth, to refuse the bonus to the ex-soldiers. It means "to balance the budget," in the words of the slogan that now unites all three capitalist parties, the Republican, Democratic and Socialist parties. And it means WAR.

The capitalist way out of the crisis is the way of misery, suffering, starvation, war, death for the workers and farmers. It is a way out only for the little parasite class of capitalists and their servants.

The capitalists have two main weapons—demagogy and terror, to put across their attacks upon the workers. They use these weapons through their three parties — Republican, Democratic and Socialist. These are, first, to confuse the workers' mind with demagogy,

with false promises of "prosperity in 60 days" and, later, with the hope that "Congress will do something before long." Thus they try to keep the workers quiet and patient under all miseries and attacks.

But when the demagogy fails to keep the workers from fighting for some relief, then the capitalists and all their parties use the most brutal police violence and terror, as well as illegal fascist attacks upon the workers.

The working class already has a long list of martyrs, of dead and wounded and imprisoned, in the fight to resist the capitalist attacks.

Melrose Park, in Chicago, where the underworld, the police, and the American Legion, opened machine-gun fire on an unemployed meeting, is only an outstanding example.

Democrats in Chicago and New York—Republicans in Detroit at the Ford massacre, and in Pennsylvania—"progressives" and reactionaries, it makes no difference for the workers. They all club, shoot, imprison, if they cannot keep the workers quiet with their lies.

In Kentucky they already have an openly fascist dictatorship, which differs from capitalist "democracy" in Chicago, Detroit and New York only by its discarding of all pretences and bragging about what the others try to conceal.

THE OPEN AND HIDDEN AGENTS OF THE BOSSES

And not to be outdone by its elder brother parties, the Socialist Party in Milwaukee (the only city it controls) sent the unemployed leader, Fred Bassett, to prison for one year for leading the demonstration of March 6, 1930, at the same time that Democratic Jimmy Walker of Tammany Hall, New York, who received gifts of a million dollars while in office, was

sending Foster, Minor, Amter, and Raymond to jail for six months for the same "crime."

The officialdom of the American Federation of Labor is openly supporting the Hoover program. It fights against the workers and for the capitalists on every essential point. It fights against unemployment insurance, against the bonus for the ex-soldiers, it prevents strikes and signs agreements for broad wage-cuts, it fights for huge grants of money to the corporations and taxation of the masses, it supports new laws to help build greater giant monopolies, it helps prepare imperialist wars, especially the war against the Soviet Union. Through its deceitful "non-partisan" policy of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies," it delivers the workers gagged and bound to the Republicans and Democrats, "progressives" and reactionares, in order to further confuse and divide the working class. It decks itself out in "victories" like the so-called anti-injunction law, which fastens injunctions and "yellow dog contracts" more firmly upon the workers than ever before.

The reactionary officialdom of the American Federation of Labor is an agency of capitalism among the workers for putting over the captalist way out of the crisis.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY—THE ONLY PARTY THAT FIGHTS FOR NEGRO EQUALITY AND THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Oppression of the Negro masses in the United States takes on the most bestial forms, rivalled only by the rule of the British in India, and by the Japanese and Kuomintang generals in China. Negroes are burned alive on the public squares of our cities,—and their bodies mutilated in the most horrible manner by crazed and drunken agents of the landlords and

capitalists. And it also takes on the most subtle forms, those of the "liberal" and "humanitarian" slave-owners, who with gentler means keep the black man "in his place" of servant — the ways of deceit and hypocrisy.

The Democratic Party is the party of the lynchers; the Republican Party is bidding for the support of the lynchers and has completely discarded its tradition as liberator of the chattel slaves; the Socialist Party at its convention last week rejected the Negro demand for social equality, and one of its chief leaders, Heywood Broun, has openly declared against enforcing the right to vote of Negroes in the South. The Socialist Party convention was even more "lily-white" than the Republican Party in its most degenerate days.

It is clear that only the Communist Party fights every day in the year for equality of the Negro masses, complete equality without any restrictions, economic, political, or social. (Applause.) Only the Communist Party comes forward with the demand for self-determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt where they constitute the majority of the population. Only the Communist Party fights every day for the unconditional freedom of the Scottsboro boys, and against each and every act of oppression of the Negro people. Only the Communist Party calls upon the white workers to defend their Negro brothers, and organizes the joint struggle of white and Negro toilers, side by side, in the closest fraternal unity. (Applause.)

FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE, FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The climax of the monstrous brutalities of the capitalist way out of the crisis, is the preparation for a new imperialist war.

Hoover, at the head of American imperialism, is one

of the chief organizers of the war against the Soviet Union. Secretly and openly instigating Japanese imperialism to begin this attack in the East, the Hoover government at the same time pushes on the French military system in Europe.

Hoping thus to destroy the Soviet Union, and at the same time weaken American imperialism's strongest rivals, Hoover and Company are dragging the American working class into a world slaughter for redivision of the world.

The new world war, which will claim millions of working-class lives, can only be postponed by the most energetic, fearless, self-sacrificing action of the workers of all lands, especially of America, to fight against and halt the whole capitalist offensive.

The Communist Party calls upon the workers of America to fight for the defense of the Chinese people, for the liberation of the Phillipines and other colonies and semi-colonies, for stopping the shipment of munitions to Japan. We call for fraternal solidarity with and support of the heroic Japanese workers who fight for the overthrow of their semi-feudal ruling regime, and support the demand for the expulsion from this country of the representatives of Japanese imperialism. We call upon the workers to fight and defeat the war plans of American imperialism, and build a living wall of defense of the workers' fatherland, the Soviet Union. (Applause.)

Billions for the banks and corporations; hunger, starvation, oppression, and war for the workers and farmers—this is the capitalist way of the crisis.

Will American workers submit to this without a fight? No, they will not! (Applause.) This Convention, representing the most developed workers and farmers from coast to coast, is itself one of the most important

signs that the workers will fight, that they are already beginning to fight.

OUR CHIEF ELECTION DEMANDS

There is no way out of the crisis for the workers and farmers except the road of militant class struggle. Against the united forces of the capitalist class, which, in spite of all differences it swings into action against the toiling masses—against this the working class must build up a fighting front of its own class forces.

Class against class! That is the expression of the class alignment which the workers must fight for and secure in the elections.

The election struggle is not something separated from everyday life and problems. The election struggle grows out of, and must help conduct, the daily fight for bread, clothing, shelter for the worker and his family.

That is why the election platform of the Communist Party places in the very first place the fight for the most burning, the most immediate, needs of the toiling masses.

Our six main planks in the election platform, represent the most pressing needs of the million-masses of America. They are:

1. *Unemployment and social insurance at the expense of the state and employers.*
2. Against Hoover's wage-cutting policy.
3. Emergency relief for the impoverished farmers, without restrictions by the government and banks; exemption of impoverished farmers from taxes, and no forced collection of rents or debts.
4. Equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt.
5. Against capitalist terror; against all forms of suppression of the political rights of the workers.

6. Against imperialist war; for the defense of the Chinese people and of the Soviet Union.

FIGHT OF MASSES CAN WIN OUR DEMANDS

It is the task of the Communist Party to make of the election campaign merely a part of the whole struggle of the working class for these demands, which is conducted every day in demonstrations, strikes, struggles of every sort, in which the widest class forces of the workers will be registered. The mass fight for these demands alone can build up effective resistance to the capitalist way out of the crisis.

Only the fight of the masses can win these demands. (Applause.) Every Party that tells the workers to depend upon representatives in Congress to give these things to them, is fooling the workers, is trying to keep the workers quiet while the capitalists continue to rob them and oppress them.

Especially important is the fight for *unemployment insurance*. There can be no security of life, to the smallest degree, until the workers force the capitalist class, the ruling class, to give them unemployment insurance. (Applause.)

Now, at a time when even if capitalist industry increased its production, still fewer workers would be engaged, because of labor-saving machinery and rationalization and speed-up — now, it is a thousand times more important that the workers shall force the capitalists to give a minimum guarantee of the means of life under all conditions.

The only project for such unemployment and social insurance which gives any guarantee to the workers, is the *Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill* which was presented to Congress last December 7th by the National Hunger Marchers who came from all over the country.

The Communist Party election struggle will be, before all, the fight for the *Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill.* And the Communist Party is the *only* Party that fights for this Bill. (Applause.)

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' AND FARMERS' GOVERNMENT

The fight for these demands is the first step to find the working class way out of the crisis. The working class way is, and must be, the revolutionary way, that is, it must be the way of a fundamental change in the whole system, it must take power out of the hands of the capitalist class and put it into the hands of the working class.

The struggles of the working class must have as their aim the setting up of *a revolutionary workers' and farmers' government.* (Applause.)

Only such a government can finally free the masses from starvation and slavery. Only such a government can open up every idle factory, mill and mine, and give jobs again to every worker and provide a decent living. Only such a government can immediately seize and distribute to the hungry masses the enormous stores of food now kept locked up in warehouses. Only such a government can open up the millions of houses, kept locked and empty by greedy and private landlords, and fill them with the homeless unemployed.

This is the only working class way out of the crisis.

Of the three political parties of the capitalist class — the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist parties — the first two are open tools of Wall Street, while the third calls itself a "workers' party." But the Socialist Party is only the third party of the capitalist class. It is no more the party of Socialism than

is the Democratic party the party of democracy. It is the party of the betrayal of Socialism. (Applause.)

A new Socialist system of society is actually being built in a great country, one-sixth of the entire world. That is in the Soviet Union. (Applause.) There the working class, allied with the farmers, took political power away from the capitalists, chased the capitalists away or put them to work, and set up a new kind of government, the Soviet Government.

Today, finishing the Five Year Plan of Socialist construction with the most magnificent success, building giant new industries where there were none at all before, growing at a rate five to ten times as fast as anything the world ever saw before, the Soviet Union is the living example of the workers' way, the revolutionary way out of the crisis, the way to Socialism and Communism. (Applause.)

THE SOCIALIST PARTY—CHAMPION OF CAPITALIST DEMAGOGY—PAVING THE WAY FOR FASCISM

But the Socialist Party is the bitterest enemy of the Soviet Union. Its brother-party in Russia joined the capitalists in trying to overthrow the Soviet government. The leader of the Socialist Party in the U. S. A., Morris Hillquit, was the attorney for those ex-capitalists of tsarist Russia who owned the Baku oil fields before the Revolution. Morris Hillquit signed the documents of these capitalists who asked the United States government to seize the oil shipped to the United States and turn it over to them because the Baku oil fields had been "unlawfully and wrongfully seized" by the Russian working class and really belonged by right to their former capitalist owners.

Can the Socialist Party bring Socialism in America, when its chief leader fights to restore capitalism in Russia?

The Socialist Party has the same program as its brother party in England, the Labor Party, which, when in office, was the most aggressive initiator of wage-cuts, reduction of unemployment relief, inflation, and the whole capitalist way out of the crisis. It has the same program as its German brother party, the Social-Democracy, which is in coalition with the monarchist Hindenburg, and is negotiating a coalition with the fascist Hitler, for the capitalist way out at the expense of the workers.

What is true of the Socialist Party is equally true of its self-styled left-wing, the "militants" and Musteites, as well as their Lovestone and Cannon winglets. These groups use radical phrases, and put on sham fights like that against Hillquit in Milwaukee, but they are all agreed on fundamentals. They are united in struggle against the Communist Party of the United States and against the Soviet Union.

The Socialist Party puts itself forward as the champion of American democracy, capitalist democracy. It is for the democracy which puts Jimmy Walker in charge of New York City, to secure a million dollars graft by farming out the rights to exploit the masses; it is against the dictatorship in the Soviet Union which shoots such grafters as Jimmy Walker.

FOR A SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

But the workers of the United States are learning a great deal about the real meaning of capitalist democracy. They can no longer be fooled, as of old, so easily. The workers know that in the Soviet Union, the dictatorship of the working class means the first and only real democracy for the workers. (Applause.) That it is a dictatorship against the exploiters and their agents. They know that in the United States, the

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boasted democracy is a democracy of money, and a dictatorship against the workers. (Applause.)

Only the mass struggle for the demands of the workers contained in the platform of the Communist Party is an effective method of gaining concessions from the capitalist class here and now. (Applause.)

There is no other practical struggle for immediate demands except the class struggle led by the Communist Party. (Applause.)

A million votes for Foster and Ford and the Communist platform in the presidential elections will win many concessions for the workers from the capitalist class, who are filled with deep fear when the workers turn towards Communism.

A million votes for the Communist platform will be the first long step on the road of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. (Applause.)

Forward to the revolutionary election struggle of the working class for its immediate needs and its ultimate goal!

Organize a mighty mass movement of the workers and farmers, Negro and white, men, women, and youth, to vote Communist on November 8th, and to fight every day in the year against capitalism until it is destroyed and a Soviet government rules in the United States! (Loud applause—ovation.)

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